



The Montana Traffic Education Association

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EXHIBIT 8
DATE 1/25/2013
HB 178

January 25, 2013

Legislative Education Committee:

On behalf of the Montana Traffic Education Association, a professional educator group of approximately two-hundred members, I would like to voice our support for HB 178 to increase state funding to traffic education programs.

Learning to drive, especially in a state as vast as ours, is more and more a necessity. Learning to drive safely is a key component of that. Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data continues to show of the dangers of youth driving. Therefore, training young drivers is vital. While our schools do a great job of reaching the students they do, the concern is for those students who do not pursue formal training due to increased course costs. HB 178 would help insure that there is better access for all students.

Cost is becoming more and more of an issue for today's programs. Where a high percentage of state reimbursement used to be the norm, recent years have seen the percentage coming back to schools diminish. This in turn has forced schools to increase course costs; in some cases making it unaffordable to young drivers. HB 178 would help this concern. A higher percentage of dollars able to be sent back to schools would allow courses to keep their costs reasonable. The expected result is that more families would elect to have their sons/daughters take advantage of these courses by trained professionals thereby reducing risks associated with young drivers.

Traffic Education professionals have had a good record of training young drivers. Through the Cooperative Driver Testing Program (CDTP) and in more recent years the Graduated Driver License (GDL) law, Montana schools have work closely with other agencies to provide critical training. Our hope is that we can continue to provide this training at a rate our students and their families can afford.

Thank you for your consideration and all the work you do to insure a strong educational foundation for the youth of Montana.

Sincerely,

Jim Carroll,
Executive Secretary